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AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
INHABITANTS OF GRAFTON,
ON THE
FIRST CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THAT TOWN,
APRIL 29, 1835.

BY WILLIAM BRIGHAM.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY LIGHT & HORTON.
Samuel Harris, Printer.
1835.

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Brigham, William, 1806-1869.

An address delivered before the inhabitants of Grafton, on the first centennial anniversary of that town, April 29, 1835. By William Brigham. Boston, Light & Horton, 1835.

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Author's autograph presentation copy to E. Weston.

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A D D R E S S .

THE occasion which has brought us together is one of no ordinary interest. A century has now closed since this town was vested with the rights and privileges of a municipal corporation ;—a period interesting to us not only because it forms an era in the history of the town, but because it is filled with momentous events, which have inscribed on everything about us, in letters too legible to be mistaken, the great and universal law of change. During this period, three generations have lived and passed away. The places which knew them, know them no more. But their works remain, and on which side soever we turn, present us with memorials of their industry, patriotism and virtue. With these generations, the present is connected by bonds stronger than those of consanguinity. We owe them a debt of gratitude ; and we would acknowledge our obligations by cherishing their virtues, and by sustaining and improving the inheritance they have left us. What more fitting occasion than the present day affords, could the people of this town have, for showing their respect for their ancestors, and learning the lessons which their history inculcates ? When do reflections connected with their history crowd so thickly on the mind ? When do we feel so strong, and such an almost irresistible impulse to turn from the present, and call up to view scenes over which time has thrown a veil ? There is but one subject appropriate to the occasion ; and that is—a consideration

of some of the events connected with the history of this town. To this subject, then, I would invite your attention.

This town is a portion of a large territory, formerly called the *Nipmuck country*. The limits of this country were not very well defined, but probably included all the southern part of the county of Worcester, a few of the adjoining towns in the state of Connecticut, and westward to the Connecticut river. Like most of New England when first visited by the English, its population was very sparse. It had been wasted away by pestilence, or by the fatal incursions of the fierce and warlike Maquas. Its inhabitants possessed a milder and less warlike character than most of the neighboring tribes, and were accordingly brought into subjection to them. What was the nature of this subjection, or in what relation they stood to these tribes, it is now difficult to state with much accuracy. It is known, however, that they paid them tribute; and perhaps this, in time of peace, was the only acknowledgement of servitude required. The first mention made of this country is by Gov. Winthrop, who, with a number of others, made an excursion up Charles river in January, 1632. After they had gone up about fifteen miles, he says, they ascended a very high rock,* 'where they might see all over Neipnett, and a very high hill due west.' No white man probably ever set foot on its soil till the autumn of 1635, when it was traversed by a company of English,† consisting of sixty persons, who, thinking themselves straitened for land about Massachusetts Bay, had determined thus early to emigrate to the more fertile banks of the Connecticut. What portion of the Nipmuck country they crossed, is not known; but as their destined point was at Wethersfield, is it improbable that they crossed this town, and that here, two hundred years ago, that small company of emigrants, under the broad canopy of heaven, invoked the blessing of God on their arduous enterprize?

No other notice is taken of the Nipmucks or their country, until the benevolent project of converting the Indians to

* Winthrop's Journal, p. 69.

† Ibid. p. 171.

Christianity was undertaken. This was in 1646. Strong hopes were then entertained of its success. Among those who were willing to devote their time, wealth and talents to this cause, none were more conspicuous than John Eliot, known in his own day as the apostle to the Indians. He commenced his benevolent labors among the Indians at Natick, with whom the Nipmucks had a friendly and constant intercourse, and by that means they were probably first induced to attend his preaching. In an account of his success, written to the Corporation of London in 1649, he says, 'that a Nipnet sachem hath submitted himself to the Lord, and much desires one of our chief ones to live with him and those that are with him.'* In another account,† written in 1651, he says, 'there is a great country lying between Connecticut and the Massachusetts, called Nipnet, where there be many Indians dispersed, many of whom have sent to our Indians, desiring that some may be sent unto them to teach them to pray to God.' Soon after this, Eliot probably came to this town; for in 1654, he had met with such success, that the General Court, on his petition, set it apart for the use of the Indians. The design of this was, as appears from Eliot's petition, to prevent any conflicting claims between the English and Indians, and to preserve to the latter the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of lands which they and their fathers had held from time immemorial, but over which the state claimed jurisdiction. From that time, for a number of years, Eliot frequently visited this town, and made such progress in his benevolent labors, that in 1671 he formed an Indian church here, the second of the kind in Massachusetts.‡

No Indian town gave stronger assurances of success than this, at that time. Hassanamesitt, as it was then called, had become the central point of civilization and christianity to the whole Nipmuck country. A school was here established, where the Bible was read and studied in the Indian lan-

* The Light appearing more and more to the perfect Day, &c. p. 29.

† Strength out of Weakness, &c. p. 8.

‡ See Appendix, A.

guage. Young men were there educated, and sent into the neighboring towns to preach the gospel. A regular government was created, and the forms of law strictly observed. The population of the town was small, yet by reason of their constant intercourse with their neighbors, a large number of the natives enjoyed the benefits of this school, and before the year 1674, seven new towns of 'praying Indians,' as they were termed, were formed in this neighborhood, most of which were furnished with teachers from this place. The chief ruler of the whole Nipmuck country, Wattascompanum, had his residence here, and from this place issued his orders and decrees to his subjects. A writer of that day calls him 'a grave and pious man,' and from some examples given of the exercise of his authority, there is no doubt that he administered his government with efficiency, if not with liberality.

In 1674, Eliot, with another devoted friend to the Indians, Maj. Daniel Gookin, again visited all the 'praying Indians' of the Nipmuck country, the latter of whom wrote an account of them. He describes this town with much greater particularity than Hubbard, who called it 'a place up into the woods beyond Medfield and Mendon.' Gookin says,* 'the name, Hassanamesitt, signifieth a place of small stones. It lieth about thirty-eight miles from Boston, west southerly, and is about two miles eastward of Nipmuck river,† and near unto the old road way to Connecticut. It hath not above twelve families; and so according to our computation, about sixty souls: but is capable to receive some hundreds, as generally the other villages are, if it shall please God to multiply them. The dimensions of this town is four miles square, and so about eight thousand acres of land. This village is not inferior unto any of the Indian plantations for rich land and plenty of meadow, being well tempered and watered. It produceth plenty of corn, grain and fruit: for there are several good orchards in this place. It is an apt place for keeping of cattle and swine: in which respect this people are the best stored of any Indian town of their size. Their ruler

* Hist. Coll. vol. i.

† Blackstone river.

is named Anaweakin ; a sober and discreet man. Their teacher's name is Tackuppawillin, his brother ; a pious and able man, and apt to teach. Their aged father, whose name I remember not, is a grave and sober Christian, and deacon of the church. They have a brother, that lives in the town, called James, that was bred among the English, and employed as a pressman in printing the Indian Bible, who can read well, and as I take it write also. The father, mother, brothers and their wives, are all reputed pious persons. Here they have a meeting house for the worship of God after the English fashion of building, and two or three other houses after the same mode, but they fancy not greatly to live in them. Their way of living is by husbandry, and keeping cattle and swine : wherein they do as well or rather better than any other Indians, but are yet very far short of the English both in diligence and providence. There are in full communion in the church and living in town about sixteen men and women, and about thirty baptized persons ; but there are several others, members of this church, that live in other places. This is a hopeful plantation.'

From this account, it appears that these Indians had made great progress in civilization ; but the strong hopes entertained by their constant and ardent friends, Eliot and Gookin, were never realized. This was a period of their greatest prosperity, and the prospects, now so bright and so cheering to the heart of the philanthropist, were soon to be darkened. A reverse of fortune was to follow, and the gloomy tidings of a declension from the true faith, were soon to succeed the joyful news of the anticipated success of this benevolent enterprise. In the following year, the war with Philip commenced. At first, this appeared to be confined to his own tribe, but it soon after extended to other tribes, and at length united most of the Indians of New England in a war of extermination with the English. The prophetic eye of Philip had seen that the extension of the power of the English would be fatal to the red men : he knew the advantages that civilization and the arts would afford them, and was sensible that unless some check was given to their progress, the Indians would soon be

driven from the land of their fathers. His apprehensions were well founded, and the bloody contest he waged, only hastened the period when the power of the red man ceased to be felt, and his name to be feared.

At the commencement of hostilities, no fears were entertained of the Christian Indians; and accordingly, a company of them, consisting of fifty-two soldiers, was raised and marched, under the command of Capt. Isaac Johnson, to Mount Hope, July 6, 1675. A part of this company was taken from this town. While in the service, it is said they conducted faithfully; and in one instance, had their counsel been followed, there is a probability that Philip would not then have escaped from his country. The first symptoms of disaffection among the Nipmucks, appeared in the massacre at Mendon, a few days subsequent to Philip's escape; and as he was probably among them about that time, there is no doubt it was done at his suggestion. Immediately after this, Edward Hutchinson was appointed a commissioner to treat with the Nipmucks, who, under the escort of Capt. Wheeler and twenty-five men, marched through their country, as far as Brookfield, where they were attacked by the Indians, and seven of them killed. The remainder soon returned without accomplishing the object of their mission.

After this, much of the confidence heretofore reposed in the Christian Indians was lost. Doubts of their fidelity were constantly increasing. One after another favored the cause of Philip, and openly avowed his hostility to the English. In the latter part of August, the Council, judging it necessary both for the safety of the English and the Indians in amity with them, to restrain their intercourse with the enemy, ordered that all the friendly Indians of the Nipmuck country should be confined at Hassanamesitt, where they were directed to build their wigwams in as compact a manner as possible, and in a way best adapted to their own defence. They were not permitted to travel more than one mile from their wigwams, except in company with an Englishman, and if they were found beyond these limits they were liable to be regarded as enemies to the English,

and punished accordingly. They were further directed to entertain no strange Indians, nor to receive any portion of their plunder, but on all occasions to make known to the English appointed to reside among them, the designs of the enemy, as they came to their knowledge. To give this order still greater force, every person was authorized to imprison or to kill any Indian found travelling abroad contrary to its provisions.

The Indians of the neighboring towns having been gathered at Hassanamesitt, it was thought expedient to deprive the enemy of the means of sustenance, which their deserted cornfields would afford the ensuing winter. Accordingly, about the first of September, Capt. Gorham with one hundred men, was sent into the Nipmuck country for this purpose. He was directed to destroy the corn of the enemy, and preserve that of the friendly Indians. This order he disregarded; and by laying waste the cornfields of both indiscriminately, he no doubt did much to produce the alienation, which soon after appeared among a great majority of the Indians at Hassanamesitt.*

About the beginning of November, intelligence was received from two Indian spies, James Speen and Job Kattenenatt, then residents at Hassanamesitt, that about three hundred of the enemy had been there, and persuaded or compelled upwards of two hundred of the Christian Indians to go away and join them in their war against the English. There is no doubt that many of them went away willingly, when it was found necessary to take a stand, and openly avow their friendship or enmity. The alternative was presented them; neutrality could no longer be permitted; and to one or the other of the contending parties, they must look for protection. They knew not the issue of the contest: they had felt the power of the English; they beheld their encroachments on their land; some of them had been falsely accused and imprisoned; and their friends had been put to death or sold into slavery. Under these circumstances, protection from the

* Gookin's MS. Hist. Praying Indians.

English was doubtful, and we cannot wonder that they should have preferred to support the cause of their kindred and their ancient allies. Gookin has very properly remarked, that 'if Englishmen, and good Christians too, had been in their case under like temptations, possibly they might have done as they did.'

Upon the receipt of this intelligence, two companies, one commanded by Capt. Daniel Henchman, and the other by Capt. Joseph Sill, were sent to this town. Capt. Sill took with him five friendly Natick Indians for guides. When they arrived here, they saw the fires of the enemy, and soon fell in with seven Indians, leading an English boy whom they had made captive a few days before at Marlborough.* As soon as they perceived the English, they fled, and left the captive boy behind, who subsequently was restored in safety to his friends. None other of the enemy being found here, the two companies marched to Packachoage,† hoping to find the enemy there. Upon their approach the Indians fled, and the English took lodgings in their wigwams, which they said afforded them 'good shelter.' They here found upwards of one hundred bushels of corn lately gathered, besides a large quantity still standing in the fields. The next morning, having searched for the enemy in vain, they returned. On their way, an incident occurred, which is thus related by Gookin. He says, 'that when they had gone about two miles, Capt. Henchman, missing as he apprehended, his letter-case, wherein his writings and orders were, sent back two Englishmen and one of the Indian guides, on horseback, to see if it could be found in the wigwam where he lodged. The Indian led the way for these messengers, and on ascending a steep hill, at the top whereof stood the wigwam, as soon as ever he discovered it, being not above six rods distance, he saw two Indian enemies standing at the wigwam door, newly come out, and four more sitting at the fire in the house. At which sight he hastened himself, and looking back, called earnestly,

* Hubbard's Narrative, p. 31. Gookin's MS. Hist.

† Partly in Worcester and partly in Ward.

as if many men were behind coming up the hill, to hasten away and encompass the enemy. One of the enemy thereupon presented his gun at our Indian, but the gun missing fire, (probably the moist rainy weather had put it out of case,) they all came out and ran away as fast as they could, suspecting that the English forces were at hand. Thomas and his comrades, having thus prudently scared away the enemy, thought it seasonable also to ride back again as fast as they could, to their company; and indeed there was good reason for it; because Thomas, the Indian, had only a pistol; one of the Englishmen, a young man, had no gun; and the third had a gun, but the flint was lost; so that they were in ill case to defend themselves, or offend the enemy. They got back safe, and their captain in the interim, searching diligently, had found his letter-case.'

The two companies then separated; and in a few days after, Capt. Henehman with a small party, made an attack in the night upon some Indians in this town, while in their wigwam.* He supposed their number to have been about forty. They fought with desperation, and killed two of his men, a private and his lieutenant. The night being dark, it was impossible to tell what injury was done the enemy; yet he expresses an opinion that several of them were killed, and supposes that their bodies were carried away and secreted by their friends. On the following morning he discovered the heads of his two men, who had fallen in the attack, placed on crotched poles before the wigwam, and facing each other.

During the remainder of Philip's war, but little notice is taken of the Indians of this town. Some remained firm friends of the English through the whole of this desperate struggle. Others joined the enemy for a while, and then became again reconciled to the English, and gave them valuable information of the designs and operations of Philip. Others were afterwards taken fighting with the enemy, and were

* Gookin's MS. Hist. Hubbard's Narrative, p. 45.

punished accordingly. Among these, was Wattascompanum, the chief ruler of the Nipmucks, through whose influence many of the Christian Indians were induced to join the enemy. He was taken, and executed at Boston in the following June. Others, at the close of the war, fled to the Indians at Canada; and from their knowledge of the country, afforded them great aid in their subsequent wars with the English. The whole settlement, which but two years before was so full of promise, was now broken up and deserted.

A number of years elapsed after the war, before the few remaining proprietors of Hassanamesitt returned to make it a permanent residence. Most of them lived with the Natick Indians, and came here occasionally only, for the purpose of planting corn and making cider. In 1698, five families* had returned, and among these was James Printer, who was distinguished for his agency in printing the Indian Bible, as well as for his great intelligence and stern integrity. To these families he acted as teacher, and undoubtedly was a very efficient and useful one. This number probably remained about the same until the town was sold to the English.† Their connection with the Natick Indians was intimate, and their intercourse frequent. They no longer had a church or a regular school; yet from their constant communication with the English, they made some progress in civilization, and were enabled to acquire a livelihood by the cultivation of the soil. In the subsequent wars with the Eastern Indians in 1722 and 1725, two or three of them enlisted, and did the English an essential service.

In 1681, the General Court appointed commissioners to examine the claims of the several Indians to the Nipmuck country. They reported that they found them litigious among themselves, and willing to claim the whole. They thought, however, that for a reasonable sum their several claims could be extinguished. And subsequently, the same commissioners, having been authorized to treat with them

* Report of Commissioners, Hist. Coll. vol. x.

† See Appendix, B.

for that purpose, purchased a large tract of land south of the Blackstone river, about fifty miles long and twenty wide, for the sum of fifty pounds, and a coat! The deeds of conveyance were signed by forty-nine persons.

The Indians remained the sole proprietors of this town until 1718, when Elisha Johnson was permitted to purchase a tract of land, on condition that he would build and support a bridge over each branch of the Blackstone river. These bridges were built and supported by him until 1737, when they were assumed by the proprietors, and afterwards by the town, and he was discharged from his obligation. Other persons, from time to time, were permitted to purchase land; so that in 1728, nine English families had already settled here. A road was laid across the town to Sutton in 1723. A purchase of the entire town was not attempted till May, 1724, when a number of persons, principally inhabitants of Marlborough, Sudbury, Concord and Stow, presented a petition to the General Court for that purpose. This petition was referred to a committee, who were instructed to repair to this town, consult the Indians, and ascertain the value of the land. They afterwards reported that the Indians were willing to sell all such lands as they did not cultivate, and that they thought the place 'capable of being made a small town or village.' No further action was had on this petition until the following December session, when the House of Representatives granted the prayer of the petitioners with certain restrictions. The Council, thinking that the price required to be given for the purchase was insufficient, refused to concur. In the following May, the petitioners again appeared before the General Court. They set forth the importance of making an English settlement here—the advantage to the Indians in having preaching and a school—and expressed a hope, that 'they and the Indian proprietors might in process of time become a small town, and be in a capacity to support a gospel minister.' Another committee of review was appointed, who subsequently reported that they had carefully examined the town, and estimated its value at £2500, with the restrictions proposed. They said, that 'one half of the

land is good, but very stony; and the other half pitch pine and shrub plain.' This report was accepted; and in December 1727, the petitioners had leave to purchase the lands under the following restrictions. They were to pay to trustees, for the use of the Indians, the sum of £2500; 'to make a settlement in the town of forty English families, either themselves or children; each of whom should build a good habitable house, and break up and fence at least four acres of land within three years; to build and finish a decent meetinghouse for the reception of both English and Indians; to separate twenty acres of land for the school forever; and build and finish a suitable schoolhouse, in which should be received and taught the Indian as well as English children; to maintain and support a minister and schoolmaster among them, and all without charge to the Indians.' Each of the Indians was to have an equal division of the land with the other proprietors, and also one hundred acres, to be appropriated to them and their heirs forever.

This proposition was accepted by the petitioners, who, to the number of forty, purchased the town on the 19th of March, 1728. The deed of conveyance was signed by eight persons,* each of whom performed this act by making his mark. A meeting of the proprietors was soon after called, and measures adopted for laying out the land and making settlements. The first division was into eighty lots of upland, of forty acres each, making proper allowance for quality. To these was added an equal number of lots of meadow, and the whole were then drawn for by the proprietors. In the following November, a second division was made of thirty acres to each. During this year, a number of settlements were made, consisting principally of the children of the proprietors; the common was laid out; the meetinghouse contracted for, and a site for a mill agreed upon. Another division of land was made a few years after; but it was not all appropriated till about twenty-five years ago.

* See Appendix, C.

The course pursued by the proprietors shows that they held their land, particularly the low swamp land, at a most extravagant estimate. They were continually haunted with fears, that they should not have land enough; and that the time would soon come, when no more could be obtained. It was, therefore, an object with all to get as much within their grasp as possible; and he who had the most meadow or swamp land, thought he had the best farm, and gloried in the idea that he should be able to leave so valuable an inheritance to his children. Nor did they place a less value on their wood. The very first year of the settlement, when the place was comparatively a wilderness, a committee was appointed to prevent the cutting of wood and timber on the common lands, as though their value would thereby be diminished, or the interests of the proprietors injured!

The meetinghouse was built in 1730, and the schoolhouse in the following year. Settlements continued to increase, and the marks of industry and civilization to become more apparent. The proprietors, and the other English families, acted in concert in support of the ministry and school. No action was had to obtain the privileges of a township till 1734, when a committee was chosen to prepare and present a petition to the General Court for that purpose. This petition was signed by all but two or three of the inhabitants of the place, and was presented on the 15th of April in the following year. It does not appear that the petitioners selected the name of the town. They asked merely for town privileges, and were willing to leave so unimportant a matter as a name to the General Court. On the same day that the petition was presented, permission was granted to bring in a bill, which passed its several readings in the House of Representatives, and was sent to the Council. It soon passed that body, and on the 18th of April, O. S., was signed by Gov. Belcher, in presence of both branches of the General Court.

We now come to the period when this place became a town under its present name. The act of incorporation put the inhabitants under the same obligations to support school-

ing and preaching free of charge to the Indians, as the original proprietors had been. No transfer of property, however, was made by the proprietors to the town till four years after, when they conveyed all their interest in the roads, bridges, common, &c., on condition that the town would discharge them from their obligations to the trustees for the Indians. This they agreed to do; but by some unaccountable neglect, no bond was given for that purpose till 1773.

From this time nothing of peculiar importance occurred in the civil history of the town for a number of years. It continued gradually to increase in wealth and population. The enterprising character of its inhabitants, united with an untiring industry, soon erected for them convenient dwellings, and brought into view on every side cultivated fields. Each one enjoyed to the fullest extent the benefit of his labors, and seemed almost to realize his fondest hope—that of being the owner of a large and well cultivated farm. The people were no longer contented merely with the necessaries, but began to seek for the luxuries of life. The log hut disappeared; and the spacious fire-place, and the almost fathomless oven, were found in every man's habitation.

This state of prosperity continued till the beginning of the French war. The sufferings and privations endured in this war seem to have been forgotten in the brilliant results of the Revolution. The honor due to the men who then made every sacrifice to maintain our country's rights, has never been awarded. We have been accustomed to bestow it all on those who were the more immediate agents in obtaining our independence, and have not remembered that the French war was the school in which the heroes of the Revolution were educated; and that without the preparatory discipline which it afforded, independence could not then have been obtained. We do but an act of justice when we say, that to no men are we more indebted for our present institutions, than to those who in that war met the enemy on the borders of Canada, and there suffered not only the evils incident to long and dangerous campaigns, but all the horrors of Indian barbarity. No men ever possessed a more dauntless

character, or pressed onward to the contest with a more patriotic ardor.

America was the prize for which the two great European powers were contending, and the principal battle ground was on our northern frontiers. To the people of New England it was not a war of conquest, but of self-preservation; and in order to protect their homes and firesides, they were compelled to go into the wilderness of the north, and resist the enemy in every step of his progress. In this war, Massachusetts took a conspicuous part; and at different times, had in the service a large proportion of her able-bodied men, of whom no portion of the state furnished a greater number according to its population, than the county of Worcester. During the whole of this war, and in every campaign in New England, several of the inhabitants of this town were engaged in the service. When the news of the approach of the enemy on Fort William Henry arrived, a company was immediately raised here for its relief. Thirty-six of this company belonged to this town, and the remainder principally to Upton. They were commanded by Capt. James Whipple, and marched on the 16th of August, 1757; but previous to this time, that fort had surrendered, and many of our countrymen had fallen victims to the cruelty and treachery of the enemy. In the following year, twenty-three more were in the service; and in 1759, nineteen were engaged in the Westward Expedition, and in the one for the invasion of Canada under General Amherst. The whole number of persons belonging to this town, who died in the war, either from disease or were killed in battle, from 1753 to 1762, was eighty,* and this, too, out of a population that did not exceed seven hundred and fifty! Seldom do the calamities of war fall so heavily as this; and still more seldom are soldiers compelled to suffer the hardships which those engaged in this war endured. They suffered not merely the fatigue of long and tedious marches, and the attacks of a treacherous and savage

* See Appendix, D.

enemy, but the pangs of hunger: and were often compelled to eat the most loathsome food to preserve an existence.* The story of their sufferings and fortitude, if it were all told, would overtax human credulity. It cannot be fully described. They traversed the wilderness of Vermont, penetrated the wilds of Oswego, drove back the enemy from Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and carried the war even to the heights of Quebec, and there expelled him from his last strong citadel. Would you form any just conception of the arduous character of these enterprises? Go back in imagination to the period when they were undertaken. Stand upon the banks of Lakes George and Champlain, and view the principal battle fields; examine the spot where Fort William Henry stood; travel over the Plains of Abraham; perceive the obstacles to be overcome, the enemy to be met, and the dangers to be encountered; and you will be able to form some idea of the courage and fortitude which they required. To you, as well as to the country, these battle fields are consecrated ground; for they contain within their bosom the dust, not only of patriots and soldiers, but of your own townsmen and kindred.

Some will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that negro slavery, now justly regarded with so much odium, ever existed in this town. Yet such is the fact. At what time slaves were first brought here is not known; but in 1756, six of the eighty-eight slaves, of sixteen years of age and upwards, then belonging to the county of Worcester, were owned by persons resident here. As this was the period when slaves were the most numerous in Massachusetts, it is probable that this number did not afterwards increase. Two or three of these slaves went into the service in the French war; and one of them acted as trumpeter, in which art he is said to have excelled.

After the close of the French war, another period of prosperity followed. This town, like the rest of New England,

* See Appendix, E.

gradually recovered from the shock it then received. Canada was conquered, and peace was established. The fears which had so long been entertained from that quarter ceased to be felt; and the whole people appeared to enjoy a security that they had never before realized. Their attention was again turned to the cultivation of the soil, and the developement of their own resources. Agriculture increased; manufactures received a new impulse; and commerce again revived. But in this period of repose, they did not forget the art of war. The new race of soldiers, then growing up, imbibed the military spirit, which constant war had so long cherished. This was but an armistice, during which the people recovered from former losses and misfortunes, and made preparations for the emergency, soon to arrive, when they were to meet in deadly conflict with those, whom before they had called upon for aid and protection.

The course pursued by the British government towards the colonies, produced a strong and universal feeling of discontent; and the early and manly resistance of the people of Boston to aggression, met with the approbation of the people throughout the Province. In the great contest, which severed this country from the British dominions, the people of this town were not idle spectators, but felt in it a strong and deep interest. The losses and sufferings endured in the French war were still fresh in their memories; yet this did not serve to abate their spirit, but made them more tenacious of their rights, and caused them to place a higher value on their privileges. A letter having been received from the Committee of Correspondence in Boston, requesting an expression of opinion, a meeting of this town was called Feb. 1, 1773, at which it was unanimously resolved, that they would defend their rights at all hazards: that they would not suffer their property to be taken from them in an unconstitutional manner, and that they were ready to co-operate with their brethren in Boston and other places, in any measures to obtain a redress of grievances. In the following year, they gave more conclusive proofs of patriotic devotion than mere resolutions. They purchased gunpowder, bullets, and other muni-

tions of war. A field piece was obtained ; and other preparations were made in anticipation of the struggle soon to follow. During the same year, the collectors of taxes were directed to pay none of their receipts into the Province treasury, and the assessors were indemnified for refusing to assess the Province tax. Measures were taken to promote domestic manufactures, and thereby remove one cause of dependence on Great Britain ; and also to provide clothing for any soldiers that might be called into the service of the country. When the fated cargoes of tea arrived, the people here felt the common aversion to that then odious plant. A town meeting was called, at which it was resolved that 'any individual, or body of men, that shall encourage, aid or assist in importing or receiving such teas, while subject to a duty, the sole purpose of which is to raise money to appropriate to any sordid measure, or any use whatever contrary to our just rights of distributing our own property, wherewith God and nature hath made us free, can but be viewed as criminal to our country.' They also resolved 'that they would join their sister towns and colonies in this cause, so that they might be instrumental, under God, of handing down that liberty, which had so long been kept inviolate, and preserved by their ancestors.'

About noon of the 19th of April, 1775, intelligence was received, that the British forces were on the march to Concord, to destroy our military stores in that place. This was the first call for open action, and it was readily obeyed. The people at once gathered to the Common, and before the setting of the sun, two companies, consisting of nearly one hundred men, were on the march to Cambridge, where they arrived on the following morning. These companies comprised almost the whole efficient male population of the town, and contained within their ranks, the youth and the man of years. To those of us who have never witnessed the horrors of war, it is hardly possible to realize even in imagination, the scene which their departure presented. The whole strength of the town went out to war, and left behind none but the young, the feeble and the aged. The fields were deserted—domestic

circles broken up—and the places of industry abandoned. The beat of the drum, and the blast of the trumpet, however inspiring they may have been to the courageous soldier, brought terror to the heart of many a mother, who, though she had bid her son go out and fight the battles of his country, could not forget the dangers to which he was exposed, nor repress her anxious fears, that the calamities of war would befall him. The scene was not yet fully developed, but was wrapt in the mysteries of the future. On one side was victory and freedom; on the other, defeat and slavery. Sometimes despondency became predominant; at others, hope: but at all times, a patriotic ardor gave strength to their hands, and courage to their hearts; and let come what would, they were determined to maintain their rights, and preserve their inheritance unimpaired.

When these companies arrived at Cambridge, the fatal blow had been struck, which eventually led to independence. Blood had been shed in defence of American liberty at Concord and Lexington; and the enemy had then retired to the capital. The first business of the American troops, which were then flowing in from every quarter, was to form a more perfect organization, and to erect fortifications. In this employment, they were engaged several weeks, when, no immediate danger from the enemy being apprehended, a large proportion of them returned home.

From this time till the close of the war, several of the inhabitants of this town were constantly in the service. Some of them were in almost every battle and campaign in the northern section of the country; and at one time, no less than twenty were in the army at New York. Many of them fell victims, either in battle, or by disease, caused by suffering and privation. Some of the sick returned home, and spread pestilence among the people. This was the case in 1776, when a greater mortality occurred than in any one year since the settlement of the town, the whole number of deaths being fifty-seven.* Not a year passed, in which contributions in

* See Appendix, F.

clothing and provisions for the army were not made,—and made, too, with a liberality that but few towns of the size surpassed. In 1780, the grants of the town for the use of the army, amounted to £95,500 of the depreciated currency,* which, though very low at that time, made a sum, that pressed heavily on the people, and took from them their entire income.

After the close of the war, when an attempt was made to restore to the tories the property that the government had confiscated, and to permit them again to return to the state, the people of this town instructed their representative to the General Court, 'not to give his assent to any act, which shall give the most trifling compensation or restitution to those who adhered to Great Britain, or to permit them ever to return and live in this state.'

Among the events of the Revolution, none afford stronger evidence of the wisdom and patriotism of the people of Massachusetts, than the constitution of government which they adopted in 1780. A period of revolution is not propitious to the formation of civil government, and to us it is a matter of surprise, that one should have been framed and ratified with so few imperfections. It was adopted with a degree of unanimity, that could hardly have been expected. Yet like all other civil governments, it had its opponents, and at the present time, after an experience of fifty-five years, it is a matter of some curiosity, if not of utility, to examine their objections. A meeting was held in this town, June 5, 1780, for the purpose of considering the Constitution, which was taken up, examined, and voted on, article by article. To the first article of the Bill of Rights, there was no objection. To the second, a small majority was opposed, because 'they thought their duty should not be included in the declaration of their rights.' The vote on the third article, which required all to support public worship, and which has lately been expanded, was nineteen in the affirmative, and forty-three in the negative. They objected to it, because 'it restricted them in the free

* See Appendix, G.

exercise of their religion, and might be so construed as to affect their rights of conscience.' The twelfth article, which secured to the citizens the right of trial by jury, was opposed by a large majority, because it did not provide that the jurors should be chosen, as they had been heretofore, and that their usual number should be preserved. Sixteen voted in the affirmative, and twenty-seven in the negative, on the article relating to the Judicial officers. They objected to it, because they thought they ought to be chosen annually, and should have no salary secured to them for a longer term than one year.

Objections were made to other portions of the constitution, such as having two branches of the Legislature—permitting sixty to constitute a quorum in the House of Representatives, and providing for so large a number of senators and councilors. The provision, which relates to the representation in the popular branch of the government, received but one approving vote. The principle, which they would support as one of equality, was to allow each town to send one representative to the General Court, and none more than three. But few at the present day, even the most tenacious in favor of the corporate rights of towns, would support a principle so manifestly unequal and unjust.

We should have supposed, that the settlement of the civil government, and the restoration of peace, together with the blessings of independence, would have secured to the people prosperity and happiness. But this was not the case. The country has hardly witnessed a darker period than in the latter days of the old Confederation. It was loaded with debt, and its energies were completely exhausted. For a time, it seemed as though independence would prove a curse, rather than a blessing. The currency depreciated, industry was paralyzed, and property sacrificed. The Confederation became powerless, and the confidence of the people in the integrity of their rulers, began to be impaired. So strong had the spirit of discontent become in the county of Worcester, that in 1786, it collected and arrayed its forces in opposition to the government, and for a time, threatened to impede its opera-

tions. As to the expediency or propriety of 'Shay's Rebellion,' the people of this town were divided; though a majority of them favored his cause, and some took up arms for his support. The instructions given to Col. Luke Drury, who represented the town in the General Court, in the following year, probably express the views of the 'Shay's men,' and the grievances which they then felt. He was directed to use his utmost exertions to 'obtain a general pardon for all that aided, or assisted, or have taken up arms in what the Governor and General Court *styled* rebellion, and that all disqualifications on that account, be removed, and that all damages for unjust imprisonment and warrants, be made good—that the government troops be disbanded, and that the utmost severity of the law be executed on any, who shall commit murder, or harm or destroy any property,—that the General Court be removed out of Boston, to some convenient place in the country,—that all licenses be granted by the Select men of the several towns; that authority should be given them to settle the estates of deceased persons,—that all deeds should be recorded in the town, where the land lay,—that the Court of Common Pleas, and the General Sessions of the Peace be abolished,—that manufactures in this country be encouraged,—and that the act suspending the writ of Habeas Corpus, be immediately repealed.'

To some of these instructions, particularly those relating to the general pardon, and the disbanding of the troops, eighteen of the legal voters of the town objected, and entered their dissent upon the records. The prudent course pursued by the government in this unfortunate rebellion, soon disarmed the malcontents, and satisfied all, that forcible resistance to the constitutional authorities, was not a proper mode for obtaining a redress of grievances. There remained, however, for a long period, some latent sparks of discontent, which, from time to time, became visible; and this was, undoubtedly, among the chief causes, which induced a large majority of the people of this town, as well as of the county of Worcester, to vote against the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. The vote of this county in the Convention of 1788,

upon this question, was seven in the affirmative, and forty-three in the negative.

This town, like most of New England, has ever regarded the education of youth as of primary importance. When it was laid out, a tract of land was set apart for the support of a school. This land was sold in 1783; and the proceeds formed a fund, which is still held for that purpose. Before 1737, the school was kept in one place only, and that the centre of the town. During this year, it was agreed to have it kept in five places; and for a number of years after, there was but one schoolmaster, who moved about from place to place, shedding light and dispensing knowledge, according to the wants and convenience of all. The present system of school districts was established in 1785; and its utility has become more apparent as the population has increased, and the means of education are enlarged. In 1739, the appropriation for the school was £40, old tenor. This, when compared with the appropriation of the present year,* appears a small sum. But when we consider that all the expenses of the school, except for the services of the instructor, were paid by contribution, we shall see that even so small a sum as this would do much towards promoting a knowledge of 'reading, writing and cyphering,'—almost the only branches of education that the wisest pedagogue of the day taught.

The support of the ministry was regarded as of paramount importance to the early proprietors. To diffuse the blessings of christianity, was one of the alleged reasons for the purchase of the town; and the course which they pursued proves that in this they were sincere. Among their first acts was the selection of a spot for the meeting house. This they intended to have been in the centre of the town; but upon a survey, it was found that that was an unsuitable situation, it being on the declivity of the hill northeasterly of the common. The spot where the old meeting house stood was accordingly

* \$1200.

selected. In 1730, a preacher was engaged for several months; but it was not till the following year, that one was settled by ordination. Previous to the selection of a candidate, a day of fasting was appointed, and several ministers of the neighboring towns were invited to take part in the services, and to advise with the inhabitants as to the proper person to be selected. The choice at length fell upon Mr. Solomon Prentice, who at this time was a resident of Cambridge, and had graduated at that college four years before. He was ordained on the 29th of December, and was then twenty-six years of age. On the day previous to his ordination a church was formed, consisting of twenty persons. The covenant to which they assented was of a highly liberal and catholic character. It was then used in some other Congregational churches, though it is believed not to have been the most common. Among the solemn obligations which it enjoined, was one 'to use the Holy Scriptures as their Platform, whereby they might discern the mind and will of Christ, and not the new found inventions of men.'

The society lived in great harmony with each other, and with their minister, for a number of years. His salary was small; and, like most of the ministers of that day, he was compelled to devote a portion of his time to agriculture, in order to obtain a livelihood. This he did cheerfully; and at the same time, did not neglect his parochial duties. The first appearance of discord was in 1743; a period strongly marked in the ecclesiastical history of New England. This was about the beginning of a strong religious excitement, which continued a number of years, and extended throughout this and some of the adjoining states. A spirit was soon found in most of the churches and societies wholly incompatible with their harmony. A large portion of the clerical talent was turned into the channel of religious controversy; and a difference of opinion upon the doctrines of religion was then formed, which has continued to the present day. Those who advocated the new doctrines, were known by the name of *New Lights*; a name which they themselves took, for the purpose of indicating thereby their supposed superior

religious knowledge. This class of persons was never very numerous in this town, though they were encouraged by the minister, at whose invitation Whitefield came and preached to his congregation. He was strongly opposed by a large majority of the people. Owing to this difference of religious sentiment, an ecclesiastical council was convened in 1744, for the purpose of making a reconciliation. Their efforts were for a time successful; but the animosity and bitterness of religious controversy soon appeared anew, and finally resulted in the dismissal of Mr. Prentice, July 10, 1747.

Most of the objections made to Mr. Prentice, and which led to a dissolution of his connection with the society, were of a very trivial character. The real cause was undoubtedly his attachment to the doctrines of Whitefield and the revivalists, though the chief ostensible one was his non-conformity with the recommendation of a former council, upon some matters of church government. To this charge, he frankly acknowledged himself guilty; and said, that he never intended to comply with that recommendation, for 'it was contrary to the light of his own conscience.' In his letter, addressed to the ecclesiastical council, convened at the time of his dismissal, he speaks in a very feeling manner of his services during a sixteen years' ministry; of the troubles with which he and his society were afflicted, and of his efforts to restore harmony and peace. He expresses a hope that the society and church may again prosper, and entreats them 'to take prudent care of his character and reputation hereafter.'

In 1749, the church adopted as a rule of discipline, the platform proposed by the several synods, which sat at Cambridge in 1648, 1662 and 1679, with some few exceptions, one of which was the requiring ruling elders to constitute a church. About twenty-five years after, that platform was adopted without any qualification.

The town was without a minister after Mr. Prentice was dismissed, till June 6, 1750; at which time the ordination of Mr. Aaron Hutchinson took place. His ministry continued twenty-two years; during most of which time, he was a very acceptable and useful preacher. He was reputed a

man of learning, and published two or three sermons,* which bear testimony to his talents and worth. He was graduated at Yale College in 1747, and at a subsequent period received degrees from several other literary institutions. His classical attainments were far above those of most of the neighboring clergy; and his house became a general resort for those who sought a liberal education. His memory was so perfect, that he often said, if the New Testament were lost he could re-write it. In his social intercourse he was distinguished for his eccentricities; and even at the present day, many anecdotes are remembered and told of him. The causes which led to his dismissal, are not now very apparent. The disaffection probably arose from personal dislike, and not from anything which affected his moral character.

In 1770, an important change took place in the singing in church. Previous to this, the New England version of Psalms and Hymns had been used. These were read, line by line, by one of the deacons; another set the tune, and the whole congregation joined. The same mode of singing was practised in most of our towns; and in them a like revolution took place about the same time. This venerable version, which had long been used as a part of the religious services in the New England churches, could no longer withstand the spirit of innovation. It was compelled to give way to the more appropriate version of Watts, all of which was then adopted except the second book of his hymns. This was rejected on account of its supposed unscriptural character. The change, however, was not made without opposition; and for a time, many of the elderly part of the society could not be reconciled to it. To the old psalms and hymns, they felt a strong attachment, and with them were connected some of their fondest associations. They had been accustomed to them from their youth, and to lay them aside was like discarding an old and well tried friend. The psalmody of modern times, however harmonious to the ears of the young,

* See Appendix, II.

struck no chord of unison in their hearts; it excited no feelings of devotion; but on the other hand, seemed like a profanation of the temple of the Most High.

On the 19th of October, 1774, Mr. Daniel Grosvenor was ordained in place of Mr. Hutchinson. Previous to this time, there had been but one established religious society in town; though for a number of years there had been several dissenters. Among these dissenters, was a strange and fanatical sect, known as the 'Live Forever,' who pretended to believe that they were exempt from the universal law of mortality. Death soon put an end to their delusions, and their existence as a sect terminated. During this year, the present Baptist society was formed, which was then composed of persons from this and the neighboring towns. Soon after, the Shakers began to hold public meetings here, which were resorted to by their friends from the vicinity. They continued, however, as a society, but a few years, and were broken up by the removal of some of their leaders to other places.

From this time till within a few years, no other religious society was formed. Mr. Grosvenor continued minister of the Congregational society till 1787, when he was dismissed. During the early part of his ministry he was exceedingly popular, on account of the interest he manifested in the revolutionary cause. He left his pulpit, and marched with his musket, in the company of minute men that went to Cambridge on the 19th of April. He was succeeded in his pastoral office by Rev. John Miles, who was ordained in 1796. Since that period, the changes that have taken place in the religious societies, and in the ecclesiastical history of the town, are too familiar to all to require any recapitulation. The present is not a proper time to review them. To us, they are hardly a matter of history; others will give them a faithful and impartial examination, and we need not fear that they will be recorded as their importance demands.

In the course of this sketch, but a few of the more important subjects connected with the history of this town have been adverted to. Time would permit nothing more.

We have seen that most of them have not an exclusively local character, but are connected with the great events in the history of the whole country; and in order duly to estimate their importance, we must go beyond this limited circle, and inquire into the causes which have produced, during the last two centuries, so wonderful a change in our country, and given it in its infancy the strength of maturity. The efforts made here to convert the Indians to christianity were connected with the benevolent projects of the age. The first settlement of the town was but another step in the progress of civilization—another flowing of the tide, which has been continually pressing onward, and driving back the original proprietors of the soil. The patriotic spirit evinced here during the French and Revolutionary wars, was the same spirit that pervaded the whole of New England. And the greatest honor that this or any other town can have from these events, is in the generous support it has given to all the measures which have created and sustained the free and prosperous institutions it is our fortune to enjoy.

In reviewing the past, nothing strikes us so forcibly as the change which has taken place since this town was first known to the English. We have seen that Eliot, nearly two hundred years ago, came here, and first preached the gospel to the Indians. That race, then free and conscious of their rightful possession of the soil, had no suspicion that the day of their extinction was so near at hand;—that their council fires would so soon cease to burn;—that the forests through which they roamed would disappear, and that their hunting and fishing places would be occupied by the habitations and improvements of the white man. The land of their fathers they fondly hoped to leave an inheritance to their children. The groves that had sheltered them from the burning sun and the driving storm, they thought would remain forever. The birds that made every tree vocal with their harmony, they believed would never cease their song. But in these anticipations they were mistaken. Two centuries have passed—and they have vanished.

The first settlers of this country had but a faint conception of its future greatness; and but few, probably, ever entertained the idea that it would so soon, if ever, be separated from the mother state. They made no calculations for a growth so rapid, nor for changes so unprecedented. The great improvements in the sciences and arts formed no items in their estimate. They expected that settlements would be extended, and that population would increase, yet they never dreamed, that within two centuries thirteen millions of people would be scattered over this extensive country, and all live too, under one government. They knew comparatively nothing of the resources of the country,—its fertile soil, its invaluable mines, and its mighty rivers. They had other objects in view of infinitely greater importance. They did not come here dazzled with the prospect of a boundless country, or with the hope of being the founders of a mighty empire. Their highest ambition and fondest hopes were in the establishment of a free government, and in securing to themselves and their children the full enjoyment of their religion. It was with this design that they left their homes and sought an inhospitable wilderness. It was this holy purpose that enabled them to triumph over persecution, to endure the inclement skies, to meet the raging elements and the savage foe, and finally to establish, sustain, and transmit, the institutions we now enjoy.

‘Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.’

An incorrect estimate of the future growth of the country is apparent in every period of our history; and it is doubtful now whether any of us can form just conceptions of its destined greatness. When the county of Worcester was incorporated, in 1731, doubts were expressed whether it could ever support a sufficient population to authorize the establishment of a County Court. No one then imagined that it would ever contain one seventh part of the whole population of the state,

or that beautiful villages, distinguished for manufacturing and mechanic enterprize, would grow up on every portion of its extensive territory. The first English proprietors of this town, in their petition to the General Court for leave to purchase, represent it as 'a place capable, in process of time, of becoming a small town.' Had they been told, that a hundred years would hardly have elapsed before it would contain a population of three thousand *—that convenient dwellings and busy workshops would cover its hills and fill its valleys—that the hum of machinery would mingle with the roar of every waterfall—that upon the borders of that common which they set apart for 'a meeting house, training field, and burying place,' three spacious and beautiful churches with towering spires would be erected—that the waters of the Blackstone would be made navigable by a canal, through which boats laden with merchandize would come from tide waters even to its source—and that across the northern section of the town iron rails would be laid, over which would pass, with the rapidity of the wind, a wonderful machine, belching forth fire and smoke, and moving by an internal power, dragging in its train car after car, and load after load, and never tiring,—they would have regarded it as an idle tale—a dream of the visionary, and belonging rather to the regions of enchantment than of reality.

But reality is more than all this; and were they to awaken from their repose into life again, how few of the scenes of a century ago would they witness! The same beautiful hills and deep valleys remain; the same springs gush from the earth; the same rocks rest on their eternal foundations; the same sun sheds light and heat; the same stars twinkle in the firmament; the same clouds flit along the sky; the same streams unite their waters and roll on to the ocean: but all else is changed! The work of revolution is apparent, not only in government, but in manners, fashions and employments; in the comforts and conveniences of life, and in the opinions and character of the people.

* See Appendix, I.

The character of the history of the past century cannot fail to excite a deep interest in every reflecting mind. Never was there a period so distinguished for events, that have produced such permanent effects on the character and condition of mankind. Previous to its commencement, but little progress had been made in political and religious liberty. The whole power and influence of Europe were on the side of legitimacy. A large proportion of those, who advocated the broad principles of human rights, had been compelled to remain in silence at home, or had been driven from their country. It was only on this side of the Atlantic, that these principles were fully sustained and their influence felt. Yet the colonies were then feeble, their population was scattered, and their influence hardly extended beyond their own borders. They were not then as now, united under one common government, and could not speak the sentiments of a great and growing nation. But they did not remain in silence. The voice of the advocates of freedom was heard in all the colonial assemblies. The first principles of government were there discussed, and the rights of all maintained. It was in schools like these, that were educated those distinguished men, who were ever ready to resist tyranny in every form and under every guise, whether it came from a Charles, a James, or a George; it was here, that the people learned the first principles of free government, and were encouraged and strengthened in their support.

The history of our country is full of instruction; and the young man, who would make himself useful to his generation, would do well to learn its lessons. He will there perceive that the great cause of liberty has been more than once sustained by an early and manly resistance to invasion: that the glorious inheritance we now enjoy was not acquired by supineness and neglect, and that it can be preserved only by constant care and arduous labor. He will there find more than Spartan valor and Roman virtue. Every page is adorned with some bright name, and every line bears marks of patriotic devotion. Whether he read of the sufferings of the Pilgrims—of the struggles of the early settlers in main-

taining an existence—their trials in the Indian wars—the hostile aggressions of the French, and the unexampled courage of the colonists in repelling them—or of the patriotic spirit of the Revolution—he will find all full of evidence of an entire devotion to the cause of country.

It is peculiarly important at the present time, that our history be read and studied. The season of danger is not yet over. We should learn from the past the true sources of our prosperity, and endeavor to preserve them. The tide of innovation is rolling onward with a fearful rapidity, and there is great danger that we shall lose sight of the beacon lights that our past history presents. The most striking characteristic of the present age is its revolutionary spirit;—a spirit that is not satisfied with overturning governments, crumbling thrones to the dust, and destroying institutions venerable with the age of centuries—but seeks for change in everything—and in its work of dissolution, gathering strength and acquiring a rabidness, would even subvert the physical laws of the universe, and make them subservient to its eternal fluctuations. This spirit cannot be repressed; and it ought not to be: for when properly directed, it is to society what a propitious breeze is to a well managed vessel on the bosom of the ocean, giving it an onward progress; but when mis-directed, our institutions can no more withstand it, than can the trees of the mountains the blasts of the tornado. Instruction from the past will afford us our surest protection. The fathers of American liberty knew well the means by which it could be preserved; they laid broad its foundations, and watched with the most scrupulous care, and resisted every violation of their chartered rights. They knew the force of precedent, and would not tolerate a violation of their constitution of government, even if it produced no immediate injury. ‘They judged of an evil in government,’ as Burke said, ‘not by the pressure of the grievance, but by the badness of the principle. They augured mis-government at a distance, and snuffed the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.’ They appeared to be sensible that to a certain extent they were forming society anew, and that what

they did would affect the remotest generations. No one can read of the great sacrifices that have been made, and the sufferings which have been endured, to establish and protect our institutions, and not feel a stronger love for them, and a determination to make renewed efforts in their support. Let the young men learn the origin of this republic;—let them perceive the toils and troubles endured by its founders—their ardent patriotism—their love of learning—their reverence for religion—their fortitude in trial—their unbending integrity and indomitable courage,—and they cannot but feel their obligation to preserve the inheritance transmitted to them. Their free and generous hearts will be warmed with grateful and patriotic emotions; a love of liberty will be cherished—an attachment to our institutions strengthened—and the republic will be preserved.

The institutions we now enjoy, we hold not as our own, but in trust for others. We have a right to use, but not to destroy them. We are bound to transmit them not only unimpaired, but improved. Our faith is pledged, and it must not be violated. We will never be so dishonored, so unworthy of our trust, so ungrateful to our benefactors. The pledge, which our fathers gave us, was sealed with their blood. The sacrifices which they made, were not for themselves, but for us and those who shall come after us. They fought the battles of freedom, and we must preserve the fruits of their victories. It was their fortune to acquire laurels in war; let it be ours, to deserve them in peace. They established schools, 'to the end,' as they said, 'that learning may not be buried in the graves of their fathers.' Let us cherish and improve the same system, to the end, that liberty may not be buried in the graves of our fathers. Ours is a no less arduous task. A struggle is continually going on; and if we would be successful, our exertions must never be relaxed. If we are true to ourselves and to our country, the beautiful prospect before us will continue to present still brighter and brighter visions.

What will be the character and condition of those who shall stand here and fill our places one hundred years hence,

we would not attempt to predict. The changes and events of the last century have baffled all expectation; and can we hope that they will be less important in the century to come? The signs of the times indicate an onward progress; the population of the country is increasing beyond all former precedent; the mechanical arts are becoming more extended; the means of diffusing knowledge are continually enlarging; science is advancing; and may we not hope that the moral and intellectual character of the people is improving? An experiment is now in operation, on the result of which depends the dearest hopes of mankind. The time is not far distant when our country will contain a population of one hundred millions, who will speak one language, read the same books, and, we trust, live under the same and a free government. The names of the patriots and philanthropists of former days—the founders of the republic—will then be held in grateful remembrance. Memorials of their worth will appear in the whole social system; and though dead, yet will they live in the improved character and condition of society, possessing a power on earth that will be as lasting as the earth itself. He who shall then stand here, will speak of a prosperous country and equal laws. He will review its rapid increase in population, in arts, and in public improvements; and when he perceives its immense extent, its inexhaustible resources, its flourishing institutions, and its happy government, he will acknowledge the debt due to former generations, and will feel still stronger obligations to make every exertion to transmit these blessings to others. But if these beautiful prospects are darkened—if these hopes are blasted—if our government is overthrown, and our country rent among hostile factions,—let it be through the fault of others, and not of us. Let our resolve be made; and standing, as we do, on the verge of two centuries, let us declare it to be—a faithful performance of our obligations to past generations, and our duty to the future.

APPENDIX.

A.

Eliot wrote an account of the gathering of this church, and sent it to the Corporation of London, to be printed, as he states in a letter dated 1673, and published in the Massachusetts Historical Collections, vol. 10, 1st series. It was probably never published.

B.

In 1725 the number of Indian proprietors of Hassanamesitt was thirty-two, viz.:—George Misco and wife; Ami Printer and wife; Moses Printer, wife and family, seven; Andrew Abraham and family, eight; Peter Muckanug (in right of Sarah Robbins, his mother) and family, three; Joshua Misco and wife; Ami Printer Jr. and family, four; Abimelech David, (in right of his wife and family) three; and Peter Lawrence (in right of Misanamo).—*General Court Records*, vol. 12, p. 228.

In 1765 there were fourteen Indians in town. This number gradually diminished; but it was not till about ten years ago that the 'last of the Nipmucks' ceased to exist. They received their yearly income from their fund in the month of May, at which time they usually had a joyous holiday. Blankets, psalters and psalm books, were distributed among them, as well as money. In 1830 there were fourteen of a mixed Indian and negro race, which still hold some of the Indian lands, and receive the benefit of the small remaining fund.

C.

The following are the names of the Indians who signed this deed of conveyance, viz.:—Ami Printer, Andrew Abraham, Moses Printer, Ami Printer, Jr., Peter Muckanug and wife, Christian Misco, and Joshua

Misco. The grantees were, James Watson, Benjamin Willard, Joseph Willard, Joseph Rice, Jonathan Morse, David Harrington, Samuel Biglo, Samuel Stow, Zerrubabel Eager, Samuel Brigham, John Sherman, John Warren, Nathan Brigham, Sen., Charles Brigham, Jeremiah Barstow, Elizabeth Harrington, Samuel Chandler, John Hunt, Joseph Merriam, Eleazer Flagg, Jacob Taylor, Ebenezer Wheeler, Joseph Barrett, Benjamin Barrett, Samuel Hall, Simon Gates, Nath. Hapgood, Phineas Rice, Simon Gates, Jr., John Collier, William Rogers, William Rogers, Jr., Jona. Rice, Richard Taylor, John Jones, Jonas Houghton, John Davis, Thomas Weeks, Thomas Pratt, and Nathl. Wilder. This deed is recorded with the Suffolk Deeds, lib. 42, folio 207.

D.

This statement is made on the authority of a very aged friend lately deceased, and also that of a manuscript record kept at the time by Mrs. Wheeler, in which the following entry is made, viz. :—‘29th May, 1762, then there had died, and been killed in the war, from Oct. 1753 to the date hereof, of Grafton people fourscore persons.’

E.

One of the most arduous enterprises undertaken during the French war, was that of the famous Major Rogers, with his Rangers, against the Indian town of St. Francis. This town is situated near the St. Lawrence, about middle way between Montreal and Quebec, and was inhabited by a tribe of savages which had long been in the interest of the French, and had done great injury to the English. The English thought that the entire destruction of this town was necessary for their safety. And accordingly a secret expedition was planned by Major Rogers for this purpose. He left Crown Point Sept. 13, 1759, with two hundred men, and went down the Lake in boats to Missisquay bay, where it became necessary to leave his boats in order to avoid detection, and travel the remainder of the way by land. Previous to this, about fifty of his party had returned on account of sickness. Their boats, with most of their provisions, were here secreted; and two men were left with them to give notice if they were discovered by the enemy. Major Rogers with his party had not gone far, before he was informed by one of these men that the French and Indians had discovered their boats, and were probably in pursuit of them. The only chance of escape was in going forward in their expedition as fast as possible, and then returning to their Fort through the back country. The passage through the country was very difficult, as appears by the Journal of Major Rogers, which he kept at the time. He says—We marched nine days through wet swken ground:

the water was most of the way near a foot deep, it being a spruce bog. When we encamped at night, we had no way to secure ourselves from the water but by cutting the boughs of trees, and with them erecting a kind of hammocks. We commonly began our march a little before day, and continued it till after dark at night.' On the twenty-second day after their departure from Crown Point, at about 8 o'clock in the evening, they arrived in sight of the town of St. Francis. The party then consisted of 142 men. Major Rogers, with one or two others, left the main company and went to reconnoitre the town. They found the Indians in a high frolic or dance, and accordingly returned and prepared for an attack, which was made on the following morning just before sunrise. The whole town was burnt, and about two hundred Indians were killed, and about twenty of their women and children taken prisoners. Most of these they afterwards let go. They also retook five English captives, and discovered with these Indians nearly six hundred scalps of the English.

After this, having ascertained that about 300 of the French and Indians were within four miles of them, they hastened back through the wilderness, by the way of Charlestown, No. 4, N. H., then a frontier town of the English settlements. They had no provisions, except a little that they obtained at St. Francis. They marched in a body about eight days; but thinking they would be more likely to obtain enough to preserve an existence, they separated into small companies, agreeing to meet again at Anousook river, about 60 miles above No. 4, where they expected provisions would have been sent them from the Fort. While travelling through the woods, they were compelled to eat groundnuts, and lily roots; and at last, roasted their shoes and powder horns, and used them for food. Some of them fell into the hands of the enemy, and were killed; others died of hunger and disease; and but a mere remnant of these courageous men returned, to tell the tale of their sufferings. Ebenezer Wheeler, Jr., an inhabitant of this town, and then only 18 years of age, was one of this party; and having become so feeble as to be unable to walk by reason of hunger, he was left by his companions, and died upon a lonely mountain in Vermont.—*See Rogers's Journal*, p. 145.

F.

The average number of deaths in town per annum from 1773 to 1793, was 15; the largest number in any one year, was in 1776—the whole number being 57; and the smallest number was in 1793, when there was only four.

G.

At this time, a pound of beef cost thirty shillings of the depreciated currency.

II.

In 1767, Mr. Hutchinson published a sermon, entitled 'Valour for the Truth,' which elicited a reply from Dr. Tucker of Newbury, and a controversy thereupon ensued, which at the time was much distinguished.

I.

The population of the town in 1764, was 763; in 1810, 946; in 1820, 1154; in 1830, 1889; and in April, 1835, 3036.
